

# Someday One Day

A Play For Stage In Two Acts

By Bryan H. Joyce

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First Performed 31<sup>st</sup> August 2001

**S**OMEDAY, One Day was performed recently by *No Mean Company* to an appreciative audience at *Cumbernauld Studio Theatre*.



Justly praised by the audience, featuring top-notch performances from excellent material by local writer/producer *Bryan H. Joyce* and direction from *Steve Keegan*.

The story of how Larry (*Paul Howitt*) and Stephanie (*Linda Howitt*) overcame their fears of rejection damaging their friendship to take their long-overdue steps into a romantic relationship.

Ably assisted by *Gordon Parkes* (Frank), *Duncan Weir* (Ambulance Man), and first-timer *Karen Tomlinson* (Jane), each had opportunities to get laughs.

*Paul Howitt's* performance went effortlessly from buffoonery to touching pathos while his off-stage wife *Linda* gave a sassy performance combining dry sarcastic wit with heartfelt emotion.

In fact, the only let-down on the night was the fact that the audience literally was a captive one, thanks to a 700 year old tree which collapsed, blocking the only road into or out of the theatre, leaving anyone who had parked their car there stranded for an hour until it could be cleared with chain-saws.

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Text From Cumbernauld News - Wednesday September 5th 2001

## CHARACTERS

*First Directed By Steve Keegan Aug 2001*

- STEPHANIE** - Main character. Realistically minded. Tends not to believe in anything except what she sees with her own eyes. Doesn't realize that she is in love with Larry until he nearly dies.

*First Played By Linda Howitt Aug 2001*

- LARRY** - Stephanie's flat mate. Far too sensitive for his own good. Tends to read more into a situation than there is. Doesn't like anyone to know how sensitive he is and hides it by constantly joking and annoying people. Thinks he is in love with Stephanie, but isn't sure until he nearly dies.

*First Played By Paul Howitt Aug 2001*

- JANE** - Stephanie's next door neighbour, agony aunt and best friend. Sensible. Lots of common sense, but gullible. Believes in ghosts, UFO's, etc.,

*First Played By Karen Tomlinson Aug 2001*

- FRANK** - Doesn't care much about anything or anyone, except his wife Jane whom he is madly in love with, but wouldn't tell her in a million years. Hobbies include drinking, gossiping and swearing. He is Larry's agony aunt.

*First Played By Gordon Parkes Aug 2001*

- AMBULANCE MAN** - Cares about peoples welfare passionately. Considers himself to be the nicest person he'll ever meet. Hobbies are smiling and being cheerful.

*First Played By Duncan Weir Aug 2001*

### Notes

All characters (except the ambulance man) have known each other for a long time. The stage set MUST include a sofa, a television, a teddy bear a plastic dog turd and a telephone.

**Act One**  
**Scene 1 - Sitting Room**  
**(December 18<sup>th</sup> - Night Time)**

*(Larry and Stephanie are sitting on a sofa which is part of a three piece suite. They are watching the TV. The set is dimly lit by a lamp near the sofa. Stephanie sits upright leaning on one arm rest of the sofa. Larry lies with his head resting on the other arm rest and his legs across Stephanie's lap.)*

**LARRY:** This is nice, eh?

**STEPH:** Mmm?

**LARRY:** I said, this is nice. Isn't it?

**STEPH:** Mmm.

**LARRY:** Just lying here watching telly.

**STEPH:** Mmm.

**LARRY:** A damn sight better than last year, eh?

**STEPH:** Mmm.

**LARRY:** Remember? When the heating was on the bung and we spent Christmas week sitting about watching telly with blankets over us.

**STEPH:** Mmm.

**LARRY:** Yup. Darn cosy.

**STEPH:** Mmm.

**LARRY:** With the world outside in the wet and cold and us in here so cosy and warm. *(Larry stretches)* Ah! Just lovely. Give us a cuddle Steph, eh?

**STEPH:** *(Not really hearing him)* What?

**LARRY:** Giz a cuddle.

**STEPH:** Shssh! I'm watching the telly.

**LARRY:** Why do I bother looking for a woman when my perfect mate's right here? Dear sweet Stephanie Wephanie.

**STEPH:** Be quiet.

**LARRY:** I was just saying...

**STEPH:** *(Interrupting)* Well don't!

**LARRY:** I was just saying...

**STEPH:** *(Annoyed)* I know what you were just saying you sappy git. You've said it before. You'll say it again. Just shut up 'till I see this.

**LARRY:** *(Pretend huff)* I was only wanting a cuddle.

**STEPH:** Well go down to the zoo, then. I'm sure the monkeys will be more than happy to oblige.

**LARRY:** I tried that yesterday. All they wanted to do was show me their backsides. You ever looked at a monkey's backside?

**STEPH:** Shssh.

**LARRY:** Really ugly backsides. Don't know how they managed to write, 'The Last Train To Clarksville' with backsides like that.

**STEPH:** Shssh!

**LARRY:** I used to really like the monkeys when I was a kid. Didn't like Davie Jones much. Mickey Thingamy was the best. He got all the best visual gags. Like trying to punch through a door with a pile of pennies in his fist and instead crushing his hand. Great stuff. I remember this one episode where they were guarding an art gallery...

**STEPH:** *(Interrupting)* If you're bored, go and ask the kid next door if he'll play football with you and give me peace.

**LARRY:** Already did. He's away to the pub.

*(There is a moment's silence in which Larry makes himself more comfortable.)*

**LARRY:** You putting the tree up?

**STEPH:** Later.

**LARRY:** *(Impersonating a kid talking fast)* Can I help? Gonnie let me help Stephanie? You let them help, but you never give me a shot. Eh? Eh? Gonnie let me? Please? Please? Can I help you put up the tree Stephanie? Can I? Can I? Oh, say I can! You never let me do anything! Please say I can help you put the tree up! Gonnie? Eh? Let me put the Christmas tree up Steph....

**STEPH:** *(Interrupting)* Look, shut up and let me see this film or I'll put the tree up alright. Right up your bottom!

**LARRY:** *(Pretending to be annoyed)* I was only asking!

**STEPH:** Sideways.

*(Larry gives exaggerated lip trembles for a while.)*

**LARRY:** It's a nice word that. Bottom. Kinda says it all. Sort of comforting. Big and powerful. Yet soft and cuddly. *(Quiet and sensual)* Bottom. *(Loud and gesturing)* BOT-TUM!

*(Stephanie's temper is nearing breaking point. She crosses her arms tightly.)*

**LARRY:** Much nicer than bum. Bum, bum, bum. Sounds like a drum. Hey, that's poetry. What you think, Steph? Bum, bum, bum. It sounds like a drum....

*(Stephanie puts a hand over Larry's mouth. For a short while they sit unmoving in silence. Stephanie removes her hand. Larry sighs.)*

**LARRY:** It makes sense you know?

**STEPH:** What? Sticking the Christmas tree up your bottom?

**LARRY:** No. Us... I mean... how long have we been friends? Since high school? Longer?

**STEPH:** No. I've known you since I was five, but we've only been sort of friends for a few years.

**LARRY:** Sort of?

**STEPH:** We only became proper friends when you moved in here this time last year.

**LARRY:** So, that time in high school when I asked you out and you said maybe and then avoided me for six months, I was just some one you knew? Not a friend?

**STEPH:** You've never asked me out in your life.

**LARRY:** Did to! Shows how much that meant to you if you can't even remember it.

**STEPH:** I don't remember cause it never happened.

**LARRY:** Yes it did. You were fifteen at the time. I remember it well. You had on a really short red skirt and a baggy jumper.

**STEPH:** I didn't wear a skirt in school. I was a bit of a tomboy. Always wore jeans.

**LARRY:** Oh, yeah! That's right. So, you did! Who was it I asked out then?

**STEPH:** How the hell should I know! Besides, no one wore short skirts at our school. Below the knee was the law.

**LARRY:** Good God, you're right! I'd forgotten that. What on Earth am I thinking about. That couldn't have been at school? Wonder who it was?

**STEPH:** The only one at our school who wore a really short skirt and could get away with it was Leslie O'Brien.

**LARRY:** Yeah! That's right! I forgot about that. *(Pause)* Nice guy! Wonder what happened to him. Every school panto he'd play the part of the dame and we use to joke that his skirts got shorter and shorter each year.

**STEPH:** Maybe it was him you asked out?

**LARRY:** You never know. I'm a weird guy.

**STEPH:** Agreed.

**LARRY:** The point is, I nearly asked you out. We've known each other a helluva of a long time. We get on really well together. It makes sense that we should... Erm, you know?

**STEPH:** What?

**LARRY:** You know...? Become..?

**STEPH:** What?

**LARRY:** Very fond of each other.

**STEPH:** *(Getting annoyed)* Don't start that again! You know that I don't want a man in my life. I've said it before. It's not you. Don't want any man. Friendship's enough. Don't need any romance.

**LARRY:** I do.

**STEPH:** It'll find you when you least expect it. Someday... One day, love will find you. You'll fall for a stranger and I won't see you for dust.

**LARRY:** *(Loud with arms open wide)* Someday, one day. *(Talking normal)* That's nice that is. Someday, one day, love will find Larry Adams. Well I wish it would hurry up, cause it's taking its time.

**STEPH:** I've invited a few single women from work to our Christmas party this year. A few drinks and I'm sure you'll find someone to snog.

**LARRY:** Huh, very romantically put! Anyway, that's over a week away. I could die by then from a lack of romance.

**STEPH:** Romance, huh! You're not had your nooky for a couple of years and now your getting desperate. Men! You're all the same! If you're so desperate for romance you should go out and look for it instead of stopping in with me all the time.

**LARRY:** It's disgusting that your ex-husband could do this to you.

**STEPH:** Shut up and let me see the end of this.

**LARRY:** Turn such a gorgeous creature into a man hater.

**STEPH:** I'm warning you. If you don't shut up I'll give you a Chinese burn.

**LARRY:** *(Sarcastic)* Ooops! Seem to have touched a bit of a raw nerve there.

**STEPH:** Shssh.

**LARRY:** You take me too serious Steph. Only kidding. Both of us know that if I was making a pass at you, I'd be looking for a new flat tomorrow when you threw me out.

**STEPH:** I said, shssh.

*(Larry is quiet for about ten seconds.)*

**LARRY:** Someday, one day? That's nice, that is. Think I'll use that as the title to a story. Mind if I use it?

**STEPH:** No. As long as you go off right now and give me peace to see the rest of the film.

**LARRY:** Actually, I'm working on a story at the moment...

**STEPH:** *(Really annoyed)* Well go and work on it then.

**LARRY:** It's got the working title of Behind The Darkness. Could call it Someday, One day. Did I tell you about it?

**STEPH:** Yes.

**LARRY:** Did I? When did I do that?

**STEPH:** Months ago.

**LARRY:** Must have been another story then, cause I've only just started writing this one.

**STEPH:** Was that the story about the boy from the beach?

**LARRY:** Oh! I did tell you about it then?

**STEPH:** Yes! Would you please shut up. I'm trying to watch this!

**LARRY:** I was just saying...

**STEPH:** *(Loud)* Well don't!

*(Stephanie starts to give Larry a Chinese Burn on the ankle and he jumps up from the couch quickly.)*

**LARRY:** Killjoy! Huh! *(OTT)* And to think I wrote my first proper poem this morning and I was foolish enough to dedicated it to you. You.., you, hot sex Goddess you!

*(Larry expects a reaction and doesn't get one.)*

**LARRY:** *(In verse with dramatic gestures)* Darkly dreaming in the night. To live a life right through. A book. A bomb. A soul. A song. Behold, the dream comes true.

**STEPH:** And just what is that supposed to mean?

**LARRY:** Bugged if I know.

*(Larry mopes about a bit trying to think of something that will annoy Stephanie. He goes to his coat which is over the back of a chair and removes something.)*

**LARRY:** I was using the steam iron this morning.

**STEPH:** Mmm.

**LARRY:** And, I was thinking...

**STEPH:** Mmm.

**LARRY:** If I was allergic to the steam, I would have to wear a mask like the ones they wear in operating theatres.

**STEPH:** Mmm.

**LARRY:** And folk would look at me and say, look there's the man in the EYE-RON mask!

**STEPH:** *(Groaning)* You should be put away.

*(Stephanie's remark pleases Larry immensely.)*

**LARRY:** See what I nearly stood on this morning?

*(Larry sticks a plastic dog turn under Stephanie's nose. She tuts in annoyance and pushes it away.)*

**LARRY:** Bought it this morning. Thought it would make you laugh.

**STEPH:** Well, you're about twenty years too late.

*(Larry is disappointed. After a few moments, he goes over and puts the plastic dog turd on top of the television.)*

**LARRY:** Look. There's shite on the telly tonight.

*(When Stephanie doesn't react. Larry lies on the sofa with his back to the seat and his legs over the back. He sighs loudly trying to annoy Stephanie. Stephanie doesn't react, so he waits a while and does it again.)*

**LARRY:** God am bored! Let's go to the pub Steph?

**STEPH:** Go your self.

**LARRY:** I like a bit of company.

**STEPH:** Thought Frank was already down there?

**LARRY:** Yeah, but he's not as good looking as you.

*(Stephanie tuts, rolls her eyes and tries to ignore Larry.)*

**STEPH:** *(To self)* Listen to it! *(To Larry)* A septic wound is nicer to look at than Frank.

*(Larry is quiet for a while and then gives another exaggerated sigh.)*

**LARRY:** If I win the lottery, will you marry me?

**STEPH:** No.

**LARRY:** Why?

**STEPH:** Cause, your an arsehole.

**LARRY:** Be serious!



**STEPH:** I am. Your an arsehole and I hate you.

**LARRY:** Fair enough.

*(Larry makes some click clicking noises with his tongue.)*

**LARRY:** Did you see the crossword today?

*(Stephanie doesn't answer.)*

**LARRY:** One of the clues was, 'a device for pre stressing concrete'. Do you know what the answer was? Eh?

*(Stephanie glares at him for a moment and turns back to the television set.)*

**LARRY:** Sorry. I'll shut up 'till the film is finished.

*(Both are quiet for a while. Larry makes some more clicking noises.)*

**LARRY:** Vibrator.

*(Stephanie is losing her temper and silently counts to ten.)*

**LARRY:** A vibrator! Can you believe that? A device used to pre-stress concrete is called a vibrator.

*(Stephanie still says nothing. There is silence for a while.)*

**LARRY:** Still, at least that explains why there is a bag of cement under your bed.

*(Stephanie bursts out laughing.)*

**LARRY:** Ah, ha! Got ya!

**STEPH:** *(Laughing)* What you doing under my bed, anyway?

**LARRY:** *(Laughing)* Needed some cement.

**STEPH:** That is it! You've managed to spoil the film for me. I don't even know what it's about any more!

*(Stephanie gets up and turns the television off.)*

**LARRY:** Hey, I was watching that!

**STEPH:** From that position? What was it about then?

*(Larry sits in the sofa properly.)*

**LARRY:** Well, you see that wee guy?

**STEPH:** Danny DeVito.

**LARRY:** Whoever...

**STEPH:** Danny DeVito.

**LARRY:** Yes, you just said. The wee guy...

**STEPH:** *(Interrupting)* Danny DeVito.

**LARRY:** ...is playing the part of Tiny Clanger. Earlier on, he was on his way to the soup dragon to fetch some blue string pudding. But, what he doesn't know is the Soup Dragon is really a drug dealer...

**STEPH:** *(Interrupting)* Which one's the Soup Dragon?

**LARRY:** Big Arnie. Well, he's not a real drug dealer. He's really an under cover cop who's out to get the iron chicken.

**STEPH:** The iron chicken? That's Mr Ben isn't it?

**LARRY:** *(Glaring)* Mr Ben! Mr Ben! That was Bag Puss you numpty! If your going to be silly I'm not telling you the rest!

*(Larry stamps foot and leaves the room via bedroom exit in a pretend huff. Stephanie puts the television back on.)*

**LARRY:** *(Off stage)* All of a sudden a man appeared!

*(Larry jumps back onto the stage. He is pretending to be amazed.)*

**LARRY:** *(As he jumps)* Ping!

**LARRY:** *(In a silly voice)* Hello Mr Ben. What's your name? Mr Ben! Really, your name's Mr Ben is it, Mr Ben? That's a nice name for someone called Mr Ben, isn't it? Would you like to step inside my costume shop and try on these woman's knickers?

*(Stephanie turns the television off again and turns the main lights on.)*

**STEPH:** Okay! Okay! We'll put the Christmas tree up. I didn't want to see the film anyway.

*(Stephanie exit's)*

**LARRY:** Whatever you say babe. I'm going down the pub for some action. Woof!

*(With an exaggerated laugh, Larry grabs his coat from the coat stand and exits fast through street exit. Stephanie enters carrying a Christmas tree in a box.)*

**STEPH:** *(After looking for Larry. Shaking head and smiling.)* Men!

## Scene 2 - Sitting Room

### (Next Morning - Day Time)

*(Stephanie is dressed and doing her hair in preparation for going to work. Larry staggers on stage from bedroom exit. He is partly dressed with his jeans on with the belt undone and still wearing his pyjamas jacket. He looks terrible and is clutching at his stomach, obviously in a lot of pain and having difficulty moving about. He has trouble speaking and moves as if he has broken glass inside.)*

**LARRY:** Morning!

**STEPH:** Morning. You're late. Jane will be waiting for you. Better get your skates on.

**LARRY:** Steph? Could you do me a favour? Before you go to work, could you keep me company until the ambulance gets here?

*(Stephanie finishes brushing her hair and looks towards Larry. She is shocked by the way he looks.)*

**STEPH:** Good God! What happened to you? A touch of food poisoning? A bad pint or ten? You been drinking snakebites again?

**LARRY:** No. I've been up all night vomiting blood...

**STEPH:** *(Concerned)* Blood?

**LARRY:** *(Carefully going over to sofa)* I've been sick rather a lot, but it's just a wee bit of blood. I phoned the Doctor on the extension and in view of my history and the fact that I've been vomiting blood, he decided to send the ambulance straight round just in case.

**STEPH:** What history?

*(With some difficulty, Larry tries to lie on the sofa. The pain is too much and so he ends up half lying half sitting on his side.)*

**LARRY:** *(Nervous laughter)* I did some naughty stuff when I was a teenager.

**STEPH:** Naughty stuff?

**LARRY:** Yeah. Nothing heavy. Purple hearts. Black bombers. Cough mixture. Travel sick pills. That kind of thing.

**STEPH:** *(Incredulous)* Drugs?

**LARRY:** Not really. Mostly cough mixture and cooking sherry mixed together. Not exactly drugs, but not exactly the smartest thing to do either.

**STEPH:** *(Shocked)* You've were drinking cough mixture and sherry?

**LARRY:** *(Angry)* No! Don't be daft. Not for years and years. Not since I was I was a teenager. A crowd of us experimented with a lot of weird crap. We were just kids playing. It all stopped when Tommy died trying to get high on Paracetamol.

**STEPH:** You can't get high on Paracetamol.

**LARRY:** We didn't know that. How could we. We were just kids. (*Upset*) We didn't know any better? By the time Tommy died it was too late for some of us. Two days later, I was rushed into hospital with a suspected burst appendix. It wasn't my appendix. It was my pancreas. All the crap I'd taken over the months had bunged it up and it had started rotting away.

**STEPH:** (*Sitting beside Larry on the sofa*) Oh, Larry! I had no idea.

**LARRY:** I was lucky. Less than a week in hospital and I was okay. Was told that if I didn't change my life style I'd be dead soon. No more alcohol. No more cough mixture except by the spoonful when I had a cough. I did change my life style. No more crap and I didn't have a drink for years.

**STEPH:** You've been a regular drinker since you've moved in here.

**LARRY:** Yeah, and that's the problem. I shouldn't have been drinking at all. That's why I'm now vomiting blood and feeling like I've got appendicitis again.

**STEPH:** (*Disgusted*) You stupid bastard!

**LARRY:** Yup. That's about the size of it.

**STEPH:** Why didn't you tell me about this before?

**LARRY:** (*Sickly grin*) You'd not have let me go to the pub.

**STEPH:** Damn right, I wouldn't have! How could you be so stupid?

**LARRY:** I try hard.

(*The doorbell rings.*)

**STEPH:** Who the hell can that be?

**LARRY:** Probably the ambulance.

(*Stephanie answers the doorbell. Enter Jane.*)

**JANE:** (*To Stephanie*) Is he out of his bed yet?

**LARRY:** Yeah.

**JANE:** (*To Larry*) You're not even dressed yet! You wanting a lift or not?

**LARRY:** (*Weak laugh*) No, I don't think I'm going into work today.

**JANE:** You've no one to blame, but your self! You will take a drink on a work night! Couldn't you pace yourself? Frank didn't have a hangover.

**LARRY:** It's not a hangover.

**STEPH:** He's been bringing up blood.

**JANE:** Blood? Have you called the doctor?

**STEPH:** The ambulance will be here in a moment. That's who we thought you were.

**JANE:** What did the doctor say?

**STEPH:** He hasn't been. He's sending the ambulance straight over.

**LARRY:** He thinks it'll get here before him. They're to take me straight into hospital without waiting for him.

**JANE:** Isn't that a bit unusual?

**LARRY:** The doc knows my history. I was... *(looks knowingly at Stephanie)* ...rather, er... ill, some years ago. My insides got damaged and for years I wasn't allowed to drink at all. Think the bevy last night has triggered off another attack of the illness.

**JANE:** Illness? What illness?

**LARRY:** Pancreatitis.

**JANE:** Pancreatitis? I know someone who had that. They didn't vomit blood.

**LARRY:** That's why...

*(Larry tries to make himself more comfortable and cries out with the pain.)*

**LARRY:** ...I'm going into hospital. Do you think you could do me a favour?

**JANE:** If I can. What is it?

**LARRY:** I tried to phone my mum, but her phone's either broken or off the hook again. Could you go round and tell her and dad that I'm off to casualty?

**JANE:** Sure. Where do they live?

**STEPH:** I'll do it? I know where they live. You wouldn't find it Jane. It's a weird address.

**JANE:** Okay. I'll stay with him 'till the ambulance gets here.

**LARRY:** Thanks ladies!

*(Stephanie puts her coat on and gets her car keys.)*

**LARRY:** Sorry Steph! I'll be okay. I'll make it up to you.

**STEPH:** You better! Just come home again in one piece. That'll be enough. If you dare die in hospital I'll bloody kill you!

**LARRY:** That's my girl!

**STEPH:** See you later then.

**LARRY:** Thanks.

*(Stephanie exit's.)*

**STEPH:** *(Off stage)* There's the ambulance now. I'll leave the door open. Bye.

**JANE:** Bye.

**LARRY:** Bye.

*(A short silence)*

**LARRY:** *(Dreamy)* Oh my God, isn't she wonderful? When's valentines day Jane?

**JANE:** Not till next year Larry.

**LARRY:** When next year?

**JANE:** February.

*(The ambulance man enters without ringing the doorbell or knocking.)*

**AMB-MAN:** *(To Jane)* This him? *(To Larry)* Christ pal you don't look good. Just a mo and we'll get a stretcher.

**LARRY:** *(Very definite)* No. I don't need a stretcher. I'll walk.

**AMB-MAN:** Never seen anyone looking as bad as you able to walk out to the ambulance.

**LARRY:** I can walk.

**AMB-MAN:** Okay.

*(Ambulance man goes to front door and shouts out.)*

**AMB-MAN:** It's okay Sid. Put it back. Says he can walk. Think he's a masochist. Be out in a sec.

*(Ambulance man goes back into room. He spots the plastic dog turd on the television set and picks it up.)*

**AMB-MAN:** *(Grinning)* I see there's shite on the telly this morning, eh?

**LARRY:** *(Pleased)* Yeah.

*(The ambulance man puts the plastic dog turn back down.)*

**AMB-MAN:** *(To Larry)* Stomach ulcer isn't it?

**LARRY:** No.

**JANE:** He's been vomiting blood.

**AMB-MAN:** Where is it?

**JANE:** Where's what?

**AMB-MAN:** The spew. Did you keep it?

**LARRY:** *(Pointing)* In a basin in my room.

*(Ambulance man exits to Larry's room.)*

**LARRY:** Jane?

**JANE:** What?

**LARRY:** In case I'm in for a few days, could you video Fools 'n' Horses for me?

**JANE:** Sure. Anything else.

**LARRY:** Na! Just Fools 'n' Horses. Oh... And Grange Hill.

*(Ambulance man enters room.)*

**AMB-MAN:** There's definitely a bit of blood in it. Not enough so that you need to worry, but we like to be on the safe side. Probably your ulcer's burst. Did someone mention Grange Hill?

**JANE:** Oh, no! Not you as well!

**AMB-MAN:** Love it. Well, I used to love it. Kind a went down hill when Tucker Jenkins left.

**LARRY:** That's going back a bit now.

**AMB-MAN:** Yeah.

**LARRY:** What about Mrs MaClusky?

**AMB-MAN:** The Head Mistress? Wow! What a woo-man! With a capital WOO.

**LARRY:** Yeah! Great isn't she?

**AMB-MAN:** Was, you mean.

**LARRY:** Yeah, right. Was.

**AMB-MAN:** I stopped watching it all together when she left the show. Man, I'd have let her be my Mistress any day, if you know what I mean, eh? *(To Jane)* No, offence doll.

**JANE:** Mmm?

**LARRY:** Know what you mean. That woman's middle name was orgasm.

**JANE:** Larry!

**LARRY:** Well, it is!

**AMB-MAN:** *(Laughing)* And I thought it was just me who fancied her!

**JANE:**           *(Annoyed)* Look! Just what's the hells going on here? Was there a fire sale at the weirdo's-R-us shop or have I woke up in the Twilight Zone?

**AMB-MAN:**    Sorry, miss.

*(With much difficulty, Larry stands up and leans on the ambulance man.)*

**AMB-MAN:**    How long have you had the ulcer anyway?

**LARRY:**       *(Getting angry)* I don't have an ulcer! It's my pancreas. I've had it before!

**AMB-MAN:**    Naaa! Something else this time. If it was your pancreas, by the time you got this bad, you'd look like a skeleton

**AMB-MAN:**    You fond of curries?

**LARRY:**       Hate them.

**AMB-MAN:**    Aw, come on! You can't hate curries. Everyone likes a curry now and then.

**LARRY:**       Well, I don't.

**AMB-MAN:**    You like a drink?

**LARRY:**       Yes. Too much.

**AMB-MAN:**    Ah! That'll be it then! You've probably had a wee secret ulcer for some time, and now it's burst. You had much trouble with your stomach?

**LARRY:**       Yes. A couple of years worth.

*(Larry and the ambulance man slowly head for the door out into the street.)*

**AMB-MAN:**    Definitely, sounds like a burst ulcer. First time I've see someone with a burst ulcer able to walk out to the ambulance though.

**LARRY:**       Do you want a fight?

**AMB-MAN:**    Ha, ha! The condition you're in Son, you couldn't fight sleep.

**LARRY:**       *(With a laugh)* Son? I'm about the same age as you, ya cheeky bastard!

**AMB-MAN:**    That's very kind of you. Haven't been called a cheeky bastard for nearly a month.

**LARRY:**       Son! You hear that Jane? Son!

**JANE:**        Well, most of the time, you act like a kid.

**LARRY:**       *(To ambulance man)* You hear that? Now I've got both of you picking on me.

**AMB-MAN:**    Shoosh! We best get you into the ambulance.

**LARRY:**       Jane, when did you say valentines day is.



**JANE:** February.

**LARRY:** February the what?

**JANE:** D'know. Haven't got one in years.

**AMB-MAN:** The fourteenth.

**LARRY:** Thanks. Could you do me another favour Jane?

**JANE:** Yeah.

**LARRY:** Check all the electrics are off and lock the door behind us?

**JANE:** Sure. Do you want me to come into hospital with you?

**LARRY:** Naw! It'll be okay. Stephanie'll be there soon with my mum and dad.

**JANE:** Okay then. If you're sure?

**LARRY:** I am. Bye.

**JANE:** Bye-bye. See you soon.

*(Larry and the ambulance man exit to the street.)*

## Scene 3 - Sitting room

### (Xmas day 2.30pm - Day Time)

*(Stephanie sits alone on the sofa watching television and drinking Vodka and Coke. She is wearing a paper hat. The doorbell rings. Stephanie answers the door. Enter Jane and Frank.)*

**FRANK:** Merry Christmas Stephanie.

**STEPH:** Merry Christmas Frank.

**JANE:** *(Giving present)* Merry Christmas.

**STEPH:** *(Taking present)* Oh, thanks. I didn't get you anything. I just didn't think.

**JANE:** Don't worry about it. It's just something wee to cheer you up a bit. Didn't like to see you spending Christmas day all by your self.

**STEPH:** Oh, I'm used to it. It's not the first Christmas I've spent by my self. That's how I prefer it. Last year was the first year for quite a while where I had some company.

**FRANK:** How's Larry doing? You be able to visit him today or not? We can run you through later.

**STEPH:** No, haven't heard anything yet. Still in the intensive care unit. No visitors except next of kin. I phoned and they wouldn't talk to me unless I was his wife or girl friend.

**FRANK:** Is he out of danger?

**STEPH:** *(Shrugging)* Don't know. His mum and dad don't really know me so I don't want to bother them too much. They'll be worried enough as it is. Besides, I'm scared to phone in case of bad news.

**FRANK:** Well like I said. If you get the chance to visit, we'll run you through.

**STEPH:** Thanks. I'll probably phone his Mum later.

**JANE:** I still can't believe it. One day he was okay. The next he was in the intensive care unit.

**STEPH:** *(Distantly)* Yeah. Cup of tea or a drink?

**JANE:** What you having?

**STEPH:** Voddy and Coke.

**JANE:** Sounds good to me.

**FRANK:** No thanks, in case I have to do a bit of driving later. I can always get pissed later tonight.

*(Stephanie pours Jane a drink. Frank sits in the seat nearest the telephone. Jane sits beside Stephanie on the sofa.)*

**STEPH:** Was bored to death waiting for the Queens speech.

**JANE:** Know what you mean.

**STEPH:** Don't know why her speech is such a big deal anyway. She's just a wee wifey.

**JANE:** Most famous wee wifey in the world Steph.

**STEPH:** Mmm. I suppose so.

**FRANK:** Doesn't mean anything to anyone these days anyway, does it? I remember when I was a kid. We weren't allowed to have our Christmas dinner until mum and dad had heard the Queens speech.

**JANE:** Yeah. Right. Look at it now. No one cares any more. Look at channel four. This year they're having Britain's own stately homo Quentin Crisp reading the Queens message.

**FRANK:** In America, he's a more well known Queen than our Queen.

**JANE:** Mmm. Must have been recorded ages ago. He's dead now.

**STEPH:** What's he do anyway?

**FRANK:** Don't know. Guess he's famous for being famous.

**JANE:** How can you be famous for being famous?

**FRANK:** Well, you know what I mean.

**JANE:** No.

**STEPH:** Larry said he'd be famous one day. He's working on a novel at the moment.

**FRANK:** Really? I knew he wrote the odd short story - very odd short story - but I didn't know he was doing a novel. What's it about?

**STEPH:** A sort of a love story.

**JANE:** Oh, I'll test it if he wants.

**FRANK:** She will too. Reads all that Mills And Boon crap she does. Our loft's over flowing with back copies of True Love magazines. Why she keeps them I'll never know!

**JANE:** Memories. Sometimes, I go up to the loft and look at them. I remember the stories inside and remember what was happening in my life when I first read them.

**FRANK:** When do you do that?

**JANE:** Every now and then. Usually a Wednesday, when you're at your pottery classes. On a rainy day it's nice. Reading the sad and happy stories while the rain drums on the roof. Smelling the dampness and the dust.

**FRANK:** If it's damp, where does the dust come from?

**JANE:** If I'm in the right mood, it takes me out of my self. Feeling the pains of the folk on the pages. Their happiness too. I get a little bit weepy sometimes.

**FRANK:** Why do you do it then if it upsets you?

**JANE:** Cause it's nice.

**FRANK:** Nice? To be upset.

**JANE:** Shut up you. Mr romance. She knows what I mean. Don't you Stephanie?

**STEPH:** Mmm.

**JANE:** (*Teasing*) Anyway, you weren't complaining last Wednesday.

**FRANK:** That was lust not love.

**JANE:** Speak for your self deary.

**FRANK:** Not that I'm complaining. It's been that long, I'd forgotten what to do.

**JANE:** Honestly Stephanie. If you want to keep a bit of romance in your life don't get married!

**STEPH:** Larry doesn't write normal love stories. They're a bit, erm, a bit....

**FRANK:** Screwball?

**STEPH:** No, er...

**JANE:** Erotic?

**STEPH:** No.

**FRANK:** Manky?

**JANE:** Forbidden?

**FRANK:** Shite?

**STEPH:** Unusual.

**FRANK:** Ah! I thought as much. Perversion.

**STEPH:** No. It's not like that. This book he's writing is called Someday, One Day. I've not read any of it, but he told me the rough plot. It's quite lovely.

**JANE:** What's it about?

**STEPH:** It's the story of a thwarted love.

**FRANK:** (*Sarcastic*) Oh! Thwarted love. That's the worst kind.

**JANE:** Shut it you.

**STEPH:** This guys girl friend leaves him...

**FRANK:** *(Interrupting)* Heard it! Seen the film. Read the book.

**JANE:** I'm warning you!

**STEPH:** And he gets drunk and wanders down to the beach to kill himself. When he gets there he meets a boy who talks some sense into him and changes his life. Because of what the boy says, he is able to continue his search for true love.

**FRANK:** That's the "Unusual" story?

**STEPH:** The unusual bit is that the boy is in fact a ghost.

**FRANK:** Screwball story.

**STEPH:** No. It happened for real.

**JANE:** What? Really?

**STEPH:** Sort of. Years ago, something happened to Larry that gave him the idea for the book.

**FRANK:** What? Someone kicked sand in his face and he's writing a book about it? Or was it more exciting, like watching paint dry?

**STEPH:** Larry was working in a big fancy hotel as a waiter.

**FRANK:** Really? I didn't know he was in catering. What hotel was it, Faulty Towers? He would fit in well there.

**STEPH:** Can't remember, but it was during the Scottish Open Golf tournament, so it must have been one of the posh ones. Maybe Turnberry or St Andrews. Somewhere like that.

**FRANK:** I used to be a waiter. Got the sack after my first week. Bastards!

**STEPH:** Anyway, one night he couldn't get to sleep and went for an after midnight walk on the beach.

**FRANK:** The only way you get to sleep is by lying in a dark quiet place with your eyes shut. Walking on the beach doesn't make you go to sleep. A hammer over the napper is best.

**JANE:** Shut up Frank.

**STEPH:** It was about two in the morning and the moon was up.

**FRANK:** Was it going for a walk on the beach too?

**JANE:** Shssh!

**STEPH:** He was just walking along in a dream. Not paying attention to anything, when he heard a laugh and a splash. He looked up and there was a boy standing throwing stones into the sea.

**FRANK:** Is he the ghost?

**STEPH:** Larry's novel is about a ghost. This story isn't. This is what really happened.

**JANE:** Well, what happened then?

**STEPH:** This boy laughs and says, another one who can't sleep! Larry just says hello and makes as if to continue on his way. The boy then says, many people come here when they can't sleep. I'm here every night! He then sniggers as if what he had said was a very funny joke.

**JANE:** That's a funny thing to say.

**FRANK:** How old was this kid? What was he doing out at that time of night? Up to no good, I'll bet.

**STEPH:** Larry says he couldn't have been anywhere between ten and fifteen years old.

**FRANK:** Arseholes! His parents could care much if they let him out at that time of night.

**STEPH:** That's what I said. Larry thought it was a bit odd too. It gets weirder. Larry had just been dumped by this lassie that he was totally mad about and this boy - for no apparent reason - smiles at him and says, they ain't worth the heartache mate.

**FRANK:** Too true. Life is a bitch and then you marry one.

**JANE:** *(To Frank)* Shut it you! *(To Stephanie)* Someone must have told him.

**STEPH:** No. It had only happened a few hours previously. He wanted to keep it quiet because it was a live in job and the lassie in question was one of the bosses in the hotel.

**JANE:** *(Really interested)* Somebody must have known?

**STEPH:** Probably, but there was no way this boy on the beach could have found out about something that only happened a short while before.

**JANE:** She must have told someone. Word gets about fast.

**STEPH:** Did I tell you, Larry was drunk?

**FRANK:** No, but it makes sense.

**STEPH:** Well, he was. He had got drunk earlier and brooded about this daft lassie. When he set out for a walk on the beach, he brought a half bottle of voddy with him. When the boy says that, it ain't worth the heartache, he bursts out crying and has to sit down on the sand.

**JANE:** I never imagined Larry to be the emotional type.

**STEPH:** Neither did I. He's always joking about sex. When ever he mentions romance I always assumed he was on a piss take.

**JANE:** Mmm.

**STEPH:** So, he takes the bottle of voddy out of his pocket and takes a slug out of the bottle...

**FRANK:** Ugh! I knew they put worms in some brands of Tequila, but I didn't know they put slugs in vodka!

**JANE:** (*Sighing*) Oh, do shut up Frank. This is getting interesting.

**STEPH:** The boy doesn't approve and tells him not to climb in the bottle like he didn't.

**JANE:** Like he didn't?

**STEPH:** Yes, didn't?

**JANE:** What's that mean?

**STEPH:** Apparently, you start off drinking from the bottle and end up with the bottle drinking from you.

**FRANK:** What utter mince!

**JANE:** I still don't get it?

**STEPH:** Nor did I. Larry didn't understand either. They then had a long conversation about life, love and death.

**FRANK:** Death?

**STEPH:** Yes. Not death, as in the end of a life, but death as in the changer of things. The termination of beauty.

**FRANK:** Termination of beauty? This is a kid talking?

**STEPH:** Yeah, that's what I said to Larry. Anyway, to cut a long story short...

**FRANK:** Too late.

**STEPH:** Larry eventually remarks to the boy on how understanding he is and how he's never had a conversation like that before with a grown up never mind a kid. This is where it gets weird.

**FRANK:** (*Sarcastic*) Gets weird? Oh, thanks for warning me!

**STEPH:** The boy says that growing up is easy. It's finding it that's hard. Then he told Larry where to look.

**JANE:** What's that mean? Look where?

**FRANK:** Up his chocolate box?

**JANE:** Frank! Don't! Your spoiling the story.

*(Stephanie goes over to frank.)*

**STEPH:** I'll show you the way Larry did to me. The way the boy did to him.

*(Stephanie stands and drags Frank to his feet. She puts her hands over his eyes.)*

**FRANK:** Kinky!

**STEPH:** Now what can you see?

**FRANK:** Nothing. What did you expect?

**STEPH:** Do it properly or not at all. What can you see.

**FRANK:** Nothing. Just wee bits of redness where the light's getting in through the cracks in your fingers.

*(Stephanie tightens her grip.)*

**FRANK:** Hey, not so hard!

**STEPH:** What can you see now?

**FRANK:** Nothing at all.

**STEPH:** Stop mucking about. What can you see?

**FRANK:** *(Getting annoyed)* Nothing. Just, darkness?

**STEPH:** That's it. You got it. Now what's in front of the darkness?

**FRANK:** Your hand?

**STEPH:** Yes. And...

**JANE:** The rest of the world?

**STEPH:** Bigger.

**FRANK:** The Universe?

**STEPH:** Right. Your getting there. What's behind the darkness?

*(All is quiet for a while.)*

**FRANK:** Er, nothing?

**STEPH:** Think.

**FRANK:** A pink Cadillac?

**STEPH:** Stop mucking about!



**FRANK:** D'know! The womb?

**JANE:** The womb? That's quite good Frank. What made you think of that?

**FRANK:** What's darker and warmer and safer than the womb?

**STEPH:** Shssh! Think, Frank! If the rest of the world is in front of the darkness, what is behind it?

**FRANK:** Dreams? Hopes? Thoughts? I don't know.

*(Stephanie removes her hands from his eyes.)*

**STEPH:** Neither did I.

**JANE:** I don't understand?

**STEPH:** Neither did we.

**JANE:** What is behind the darkness. Life? Death?

**STEPH:** Don't know, the boy never told him.

**FRANK:** *(Sighing)* Typical! A shaggy dog story without a punchline. More mince.

**STEPH:** *(Annoyed)* It's true!

**FRANK:** Larry's in hospital and he's still managing to play jokes on us.

**JANE:** Just ignore him Stephanie. Go on.

**STEPH:** Anyway, Larry's sitting there on the sand with the boys hands over his eyes... Right?

**JANE:** *(Really interested)* Right?

**STEPH:** The boy takes his hands away from Larry's eyes and... *(quietly)* guess what?

**JANE:** What?

**STEPH:** *(Mysteriously)* There was no one there. The beach was empty!

**JANE:** Where'd he go?

**STEPH:** That's something we'll never know. The beach was fenced off because it backed onto the golf course. It was very narrow and the nearest exit was nearly a mile away!

**FRANK:** Don't be daft! He must have climbed the fence and got onto the golf course.

**STEPH:** That's what Larry thought. He ran up the nearest sand dune to the golf course and there was no sign of the boy. The fence was too high to be climbed quickly and there was barbed wire on the top. It was as if the boy had just vanished!

**JANE:** Spooky?

**FRANK:** Aw, shut up! You're as daft as her. He was just hiding.

**STEPH:** The beach had no rocks on it and the golf course was flood lit. There was no place to hide for miles.

**FRANK:** Obviously there was.

**STEPH:** Larry swears there wasn't.

**FRANK:** So, what's this about. Thought you said this was the true version not the ghost story?

**STEPH:** It is true!

**FRANK:** No it isn't. Either Larry is playing a joke or testing one of his daft stories.

**JANE:** Well, I believe it. Sounds real to me.

**STEPH:** Yeah. It's too weird to be made up. He would have to have trusted me to keep it secret if it was a joke.

**FRANK:** He obviously knew that you wouldn't keep it secret.

**STEPH:** *(Indignantly)* But, I didn't tell anyone!

**FRANK:** You have now.

**STEPH:** That's different!

**JANE:** Yeah, we're friends.

**FRANK:** But, a secret isn't a secret if you tell it to someone.

**JANE:** Oh, stop nit picking Frank.

**STEPH:** If it was a secret, secret, he wouldn't have mentioned it at all.

**FRANK:** A secret, secret! Look, he told it to you either because it was a joke and he knew you would spread it or it wasn't a joke and he trusted you to keep it secret.

**STEPH:** He wouldn't mind yous two knowing.

**JANE:** No, he wouldn't.

**FRANK:** *(Sighing)* Women!

**JANE:** Don't start.

*(The telephone starts to ring.)*

**FRANK:** Saved by the bell.

*(Stephanie stands up and stares at the phone as if shocked.)*

**FRANK:** Well are you going to answer it? It could be the hospital.

**STEPH:** *(Frightened)* Yeah. No. You answer it.

**FRANK:** You sure?

**STEPH:** Yeah. Please.

**FRANK:** *(Answering phone)* Hello... Yeah, I thought it was... How's it going me old bum chum... We were just talking about you... All bad... Yeah... Frankie... Who'd you think it was... How many bum chums have you got then... Yeah... Right... I don't know... She never said... Under your bed... I'll put her on...

**STEPH:** *(Trying to take phone)* Is that Larry? Is he okay?

**FRANK:** *(Not giving her the phone)* Oh, right... Yeah, there they go now... Ward five... Can I bring... *(To Stephanie)* The money ran out.

**STEPH:** Was that him? What did he say? Why didn't you give me the phone?

**FRANK:** Yeah, that was Larry. He only had one ten pence, so there wasn't time to chat. He's okay. They've just, moved him out of the intensive care unit and into the one of the wards.

**STEPH:** *(Relieved)* Oh, that's brilliant! He must be out of danger then!

**JANE:** Wonderful. Can we go in and see him?

**FRANK:** He's still very ill, but he's off the critical list, and he's allowed visitors. He needs change for the phone.

**STEPH:** He should have reversed the charges.

**FRANK:** Probably didn't occur to him. He'll be as high as a kite with the pain killers. He wanted to know if you laughed at the Christmas present he left you and to tell you that the real present's under his bed.

**STEPH:** *(Distantly)* Yeah, I laughed.

**FRANK:** What was it?

**STEPH:** *(Upset)* Liquorice flavoured condoms!

*(Stephanie suddenly bursts out crying and sits down suddenly.)*

**FRANK:** *(Puzzled)* He's okay. What you greetin' for?

**JANE:** *(Comforting Stephanie)* Don't be so thick Frank. Go and make some tea.

**FRANK:** Okay. Sorry.

*(Exit Frank to Kitchen.)*

**JANE:** It's okay Steph. Let it out.

**STEPH:** I don't know what I'd have done if he'd died. I've not slept for days.

**JANE:** It caught us all by surprise.

**STEPH:** (*Nodding*) Yeah, but, the rest of yous aren't in love with him. I am.

**JANE:** Ah! I guessed as much.

**STEPH:** You guessed?

**JANE:** I've noticed the way yous sometimes look at each other.

**STEPH:** (*Sighing*) Me, maybe, but not him. He's only interested in friendship.

**JANE:** Friendship, huh! Are you blind Steph? God didn't mean men and women to be friends. That's why - SHE - invented sex. Take sex away and the only thing men are good at is causing fights.

**STEPH:** Larry's not interested in me. Least, not in that way.

**JANE:** How do you know? Have you asked him?

**STEPH:** No.

**JANE:** Why not?

**STEPH:** I'm too scared.

**JANE:** Scared? Scared of what?

**STEPH:** (*Dreamy*) Of losing a wonderful friend.

**JANE:** (*Laughing*) A wonderful friend? He irritates the hell out of you. He'd only been here a few weeks when you nearly killed him for embarrassing you in front of everyone.

**STEPH:** Eh? I don't remember that?

**JANE:** Sure, you do. Last Hogmanay, when he went up to your mum, cuddled her and said in a very loud voice, show us yer willy Misses!

**STEPH:** (*Laughing*) He didn't say that!

**JANE:** He did too! And you thumped him hard and your mum had a fit of the giggles and nearly pished herself laughing!

**STEPH:** You're kidding me!

**JANE:** No. Don't you remember?

**STEPH:** (*Embarrassed*) No. (*Shaking head*) I don't remember any of this!

**JANE:** I guess, he wasn't the only one pished out of his skull.

**STEPH:** *(Smiling)* I'm not kidding! I really don't remember at all. *(Pause)* Sounds like him though.

**JANE:** And you call him a wonderful friend?

**STEPH:** But he IS wonderful! So warm and genuine. And considerate. Totally trust worthy. *(Face falling)* At least... I thought he was, until this happened. I still can't believe it, can you? I mean, drugs?

**JANE:** I wouldn't have thought he was the type to do drugs either. You know what kids are like. Probably went along with the rest of them cause he was scared to say no.

**STEPH:** But why would he hide it if it happened so long ago and he wasn't doing it any more.

**JANE:** I'd imagine he's deeply ashamed of it all. You're the person he cares about most in the whole world. The last thing he would want is you to think less of him.

**STEPH:** I know he's not perfect. No one is.

**JANE:** He thinks you are.

**STEPH:** Don't be silly.

**JANE:** Oh, Stephanie, are you really so blind? He's mad about you. Can't you see that? Do you really think all those lovey dovey jokes and innuendos are just jokes?

**STEPH:** Course they are. You know what like he is. He couldn't stop joking to save him self.

**JANE:** Right. But, think about it. He knows me pretty well, but have you ever known him to call me things like Sex Goddess or Gorgeous Love Bundle?

**STEPH:** No.

**JANE:** Does he ever pretend to start crying cause he wants a cuddle off me?

**STEPH:** No.

**JANE:** Would he send me cheese 'n' onion condoms as a joke?

**STEPH:** *(Laughing)* Liquorice.

**JANE:** Whatever. Would he send me them as a joke? Would he play a joke like that on anyone else but you? In fact, have you ever known him to say anything even mildly suggestive to anyone other than you?

**STEPH:** No. Yes. I can't remember. He must have?

**JANE:** Ah! There you are then! That's what I said when Frank first noticed it. Back in the summer he pointed out how Larry was always joking about sex and love, but that he only ever did it when you were about.

**STEPH:** But, he does it with every one?

**JANE:** Maybe so, but it's always directed at you.

**STEPH:** *(Not sure)* You can't be right. I would have noticed.

**JANE:** There's none so blind as those who refuse to see.

**STEPH:** *(Considering)* Mmm? You're absolutely certain?

**JANE:** Well..? Not absolutely one hundred percent certain. But if when he comes home again you were to leap on him shouting take me, take me, I don't think you'd be in danger of losing a good friend.

**STEPH:** *(Laughing)* If I get any evidence you're right, I just might do that.

**JANE:** Oh, I think I'm right. I've seen the way he looks at you. The way Frank looks at me.  
*(Sighs)*

**STEPH:** Mmm? Give Frank a few years. You guys are still wet behind the ears. *(Sighs)* I'll wait and see.

**JANE:** See what?

**STEPH:** If you ARE right - and I think you might be - then he'll say something sooner or later. I'll wait 'till he gets out of hospital and feels a bit better. Then if he still says nothing, I'll confront him.

**JANE:** Bet you won't. Come next Christmas the both of you will still be pretending to be friends.

**STEPH:** Bet your wrong. In fact, I bet well before next Christmas we'll be sharing the same bed.

**JANE:** Maybe. Though it will probably be different nights.

**STEPH:** Yeah, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays will be my nights.

**JANE:** Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays will be his.

**STEPH:** What about Sundays?

**JANE:** Sundays you don't need to go to bed at all.

**STEPH:** Why? What'll we be doing instead?

*(Stephanie and Jane giggle loudly. Frank enters.)*

**FRANK:** What's so funny?

**JANE:** Nothing.

**FRANK:** What do you take in your tea Steph?

**STEPH:** The same as usual.

**FRANK:** What's the usual?

**JANE:** You've made her tea loads of times before.

**FRANK:** Yeah, but I forget.

**STEPH:** Just milk. Lots of milk.

**FRANK:** Right.

**JANE:** Don't forget the bromide in your own.

**FRANK:** Right.

*(Frank exits. Stephanie and Jane giggle.)*

**JANE:** *(Raising her glass)* Here's to men! Numpties the lot of them!

**STEPH:** *(Raising glass)* Numpties the lot of them!

**JANE:** Can't live with them!

**STEPH:** Can't live without them!

*(They knock the glasses together say 'cheers' finish their drinks and laugh loudly.)*

## End Of Act One

## Act Two

### Scene 4 - Sitting Room

#### (February 20<sup>th</sup> - Day Time)

*(Larry and Frank enter. Larry is obviously in pain and very weak. He spends the whole scene moving slowly and holds his stomach gingerly. Frank is carrying a large plastic bag containing Larry's things from hospital. Larry is carrying a teddy bear.)*

**LARRY:** Hello room.

*(Larry slowly goes over to the sofa and sits down with a happy sigh.)*

**FRANK:** I'll just dump this in your room.

*(Frank exits to dispose of the plastic bag of clothes)*

**LARRY:** Hello my lovely wee sofa. Didn't think I'd see you again me old pal. *(In sofa's voice)* Didn't think you'd be coming back Larry me old bud. *(Normal voice)* Very nearly wasn't old pal.

**FRANK:** *(Enters)* Still think you should have waited until the weekend before coming home like the doctor said you should.

**LARRY:** Aw, I was bored out of my mind. Was nearly two months I was in there. Besides, I wanted to surprise Stephanie.

**FRANK:** You'll really surprise her if you drop down dead.

*(Larry cuddles the teddy bear.)*

**LARRY:** *(To teddy)* Well, pal, how do you like your new home?

**FRANK:** You like a cup of tea?

**LARRY:** No thanks. But if there's any cans of juice in the fridge, I'd love one. Have one your self.

*(Frank exits.)*

**LARRY:** Hey, look! In hospital for nearly two months and there's still shite on the telly!

**FRANK:** *(Off stage)* WHAT?

**LARRY:** Nothing.

*(Frank enters.)*

**FRANK:** There you go.

*(Frank gives can of fizzy drink to Larry.)*



**LARRY:** Thanks.

*(Larry opens can and takes a drink.)*

**LARRY:** Did she get them?

**FRANK:** Did who, get what?

**LARRY:** The flowers. There was an Inter-flora in the hospital. I sent Stephanie a posy for valentines day. I wanted to send a really big bunch of flowers, but I didn't have much money.

**FRANK:** Oh, that was you was it? That's why you went mad when I couldn't lend you any dosh last visit? Is this a friendship thing or do you fancy her after all?

**LARRY:** Did they get delivered or not?

**FRANK:** Yeah. But you should have put a note in with them.

**LARRY:** I did, but at the last minute I changed my mind. I'd wrote, A Beginning Or An Ending? All My Love Larry, and then I thought, Naw, that's too much she'll throw up. Better to send it anonymously that way I'll find out who she wanted it to be from.

**FRANK:** Wasn't it better to let her know?

**LARRY:** Yes. No. I don't know. Maybe, she'd have been angry.

**FRANK:** Maybe she wouldn't.

**LARRY:** She made it clear a long time ago, if I wanted to be her flatmate I'd better keep it platonic.

**FRANK:** Ha, ha, ha! And, it's not platonic, is it? *(Knowingly)* Maybe she's changed her mind?

**LARRY:** I wouldn't think so. Did she realize the posy was from me?

**FRANK:** No. She thought it was from her ex-husband.

**LARRY:** *(Panicking)* Her ex? Why would she think that? Is she still carrying a torch for him?

**FRANK:** No, nothing like that. Calm down. Last year he sent her a posy anonymously. There was no card with it.

**LARRY:** How do you know who it was from then?

**FRANK:** He told her when he phoned her up to wish her a happy valentines day. He's got some strange idea in his head that ex-husbands and wife's should stay friends.

**LARRY:** Did he send her one this year?

**FRANK:** D'know? She never said.

**LARRY:** Bastard! That's it! He sent the flowers and mine were delivered to the wrong house!

**FRANK:** Was yours daffodils and roses?

**LARRY:** Yes.

**FRANK:** Well there you are then.

**LARRY:** Maybe he sent the same.

**FRANK:** Behave your self! Who the hell sends daffodils and roses in the same posy? No one, but an complete idiot.

**LARRY:** Obviously, she thought he would.

**FRANK:** Yeah, so she thinks her ex is a bigger idiot that you? Isn't that a complement?

**LARRY:** Wish I'd sent the card now.

**FRANK:** No big deal. Just tell her.

**LARRY:** Tell her what?

**FRANK:** That you sent the flowers.

**LARRY:** Don't think I should.

**FRANK:** Why?

**LARRY:** She might be angry.

**FRANK:** *(Through gritted teeth)* Well, don't tell her then!

**LARRY:** *(Shouting)* But, I want to tell her!

**FRANK:** *(Shouting)* Well, bloody tell her then!

**LARRY:** But she might be angry.

**FRANK:** *(Trying to keep clam)* This is a gag isn't it? Eh? You're winding me up. Out of hospital two minutes and you're at it already.

**LARRY:** No. Honestly this isn't a gag. I had a lot of time to think when I was in hospital. We have so much in common.

**FRANK:** Huh! Like what for example? Bet you don't even know what her favourite song is. Eh? You don't, do you? Or her favourite film?

**LARRY:** Ah, that's where your wrong Mister clever dick! Her mostest bestest favouritest film of all time is, Disney's The Little Mermaid.

**FRANK:** And you're favourite film.

**LARRY:** Er, can't remember...

**FRANK:** It's Nightmare on Elm Street. Isn't it?

**LARRY:** Might be.

**FRANK:** It is, isn't it?

**LARRY:** Okay! Okay! It's Nightmare On Elm Street. Okay? Happy?

**FRANK:** Does lovely innocent Ariel the Mermaid remind you of Freddie Kruger? I don't think she does, does she? Or perhaps she does and I've just never noticed it before! Eh? Does Ariel have skin peeling off her face? Does the cute little Rastafarian crab have razor blades instead of claws?

**LARRY:** Oh, shut up moaning. I'm not well. I've just got out of hospital.

**FRANK:** What's her favourite colour?

**LARRY:** Red.

**FRANK:** Correct. And yours is?

**LARRY:** Blue.

**FRANK:** Favourite food?

**LARRY:** Prawn cocktail?

**FRANK:** Wrong. It's turkey. She told us at Christmas. Your fave food?

**LARRY:** Mars bars.

**FRANK:** Fave drink?

**LARRY:** Er...

**FRANK:** Quick.

**LARRY:** I, er...

**FRANK:** Come on! Faster! Favourite drink?

**LARRY:** Vodka?

**FRANK:** Wrong! It's Southern Comfort. And what's yours.

**LARRY:** Anything that gets me drunk.

**FRANK:** Anything that gets you drunk. And we nearly forgot her favourite song, didn't we. Remind me again? What's it called?

**LARRY:** Chapel Of Love.

**FRANK:** By?

**LARRY:** D'know. Some buns from the sixties.

**FRANK:** And yours?

**LARRY:** *(Annoyed)* Get Your Shit Together, by Danger Danger.

**FRANK:** You seeing a pattern here? Doesn't seem to me like you have much in common. I know more about her than you seem to.

**LARRY:** Right, Mr smart arse! If you're so clever, what does she do for a living?

**FRANK:** Computer operator?

**LARRY:** *(Pointing a finger)* Ah! That's where your wrong matey boy! She's a LAN manager.

**FRANK:** LAND manager?

**LARRY:** No. LAN manager. L. A. N.

**FRANK:** What's a LAN manager when it's at home?

**LARRY:** It's a... erm,... *(Reluctantly)* It's a sort of computery thing.

**FRANK:** Ah! So, I was right. What sort of computery thing?

**LARRY:** D'know.

**FRANK:** Ah, ha! *(Sarcastic)* You really do have a hell of a lot in common don't you, eh? She managers a computery thing and you...

**LARRY:** *(Depressed)* ...work a machine that puts the perforations in toilet rolls! Okay, so she's got a good job and I've got a crap one - pun not intended. Big deal! Why can't you just encourage me instead of bringing me down?

**FRANK:** I'm just saying...

**LARRY:** *(Interrupting)* Well don't! This isn't about the physical comparisons. It's deeper than that. Much, much deeper. I'm talking about outlook. Perspective. About reactions to situations. Of compatibility. Of lots of different things. Things which can't be measured. I've been thinking about her a lot. Thinking about US, a lot and I think I love her.

**FRANK:** You think you love her? Aren't you sure?

**LARRY:** *(Angry)* All right! I don't just think I love her. I do love her! There! I've said it! I love her! You happy now? I love Stephanie Brown and...

*(Larry seems to be suddenly upset and goes quiet.)*

**FRANK:** ...and what?

**LARRY:** ... and, I'm scared to do anything about it in case I lose her.

**FRANK:** *(Nervous laugh)* Oh, Jesus, not you as well! Jane had all this shite from Stephanie over Christmas. *(Pretending to be upset)* That's it. I've had enough! You're mad. Yous both are. As mad as shit-house rats! Wake me up, it's all a nightmare!

*(For a short while there is silence. Larry doesn't understand and mumbles incoherently making small gestures with his hands.)*

**LARRY:** Jane had all WHAT shite?

**FRANK:** *(In aggressive exaggerated calmness)* Look! It's dead simple. You want me to explain in a manner that cretin can understand?

**LARRY:** No, just me.

**FRANK:** Right. *(Slowly)* You - are in love? Right?

**LARRY:** Yes.

**FRANK:** With Stephanie?

**LARRY:** Right.

**FRANK:** And you don't want her to know that you're in love with her because she might not want to be your friend any more? Right?

**LARRY:** Right.

**FRANK:** She's in love with you, right?

**LARRY:** No, erm....

**FRANK:** *(Interrupting)* Just say right.

**LARRY:** But...

**FRANK:** Just say right!

**LARRY:** Right?

**FRANK:** But, she's doesn't want YOU to know that SHE'S in love with you in case you don't want to be her friend any more?

**LARRY:** Course I would! I'll be her friend forever. Where did you get this daft idea?

**FRANK:** Stephanie told Jane that she was mad about you.

**LARRY:** When?

**FRANK:** Christmas day.

**LARRY:** *(Unconvinced)* I see?

*(Larry thinks about this. He mumbles as if he is about to ask something and then changes his mind. He does this several times.)*

**LARRY:** Let's see if I've got this right? You're saying...

*(Frank crosses his arms and stands up.)*

**FRANK:** *(Sarcastic)* Yes Larry, what am I saying? Come on man, you can do it!

**LARRY:** *(Puzzled)* You're saying, Stephanie fancies me?

**FRANK:** *(In a daft voice)* By Jove, you've got it! Who's says you're an idiot?

**LARRY:** Well, you do usually.

**FRANK:** Yeah, but since when have you ever believed anything I've said?

**LARRY:** *(Grinning exaggeratedly)* Stephanie fancies me?

**FRANK:** *(Grinning exaggeratedly)* Yeah!

**LARRY:** Me?

**FRANK:** You!

**LARRY:** *(Bashful with a slight laugh)* Gosh!

**FRANK:** Amazing isn't it. I mean, who would have guessed? Both of you are totally mad about the other and too scared to let the other one know.

**LARRY:** Yeah. *(With raised finger)* Perhaps..? I should let her know?

**FRANK:** Wow! There's just no stopping you once you get going is there?

**LARRY:** I'll wait a while, till I get my health back and we can have a candlelit dinner...

**BOTH:** *(Nodding and gesturing)* Or something?

**LARRY:** And at the right moment, I'll tell her that I really, really like her.

**FRANK:** Really, really like her? Oh, come on Larry! Thought you're in love. Just tell her you love her.

**LARRY:** I don't like that word.

**FRANK:** Love?

**LARRY:** Yeah. It's so... So..?

**FRANK:** So, what?

**LARRY:** Disposable.

**FRANK:** Disposable?

**LARRY:** Yeah. Disposable. It doesn't mean anything these days. It's a meaningless word that guy's use as a last resort when they're trying to get some bird into their bed.

**FRANK:** *(Sighing)* If you really believe that, you got problems matey.

**LARRY:** I don't, but that's what woman think these days.

**FRANK:** Don't talk crap! Who gave you that idea?

**LARRY:** Last summer I heard your Jane tell Steph that when a man tells a woman he's in love with her, he's trying to get into her knickers.

**FRANK:** *(Laughing)* Well you are, aren't you?

*(Larry is a bit miffed at this suggestion and ignores it.)*

**LARRY:** *(Sarcastic)* Ha, bloody, ha!

**FRANK:** So, you're going to wait a while and organize a candlelit dinner...

**BOTH:** Or something...

**FRANK:** And tell her that you love her?

**LARRY:** Erm?

**FRANK:** Erm, nothing! Yes or no?

**LARRY:** Erm?

**FRANK:** Yes, or no Larry? Are you a man or a mouse? And if you say *(Silly voice)* I like cheese! *(Normal voice)* I'll thump you.

**LARRY:** Yes! *(Thumps table)* Dag nab it! I'll do it!

**FRANK:** That's the spirit, matey. Seize the day! Grab the bull by the balls! *(Miming grabbing the bull by the balls)* Give them a good hard yank!

**LARRY:** *(Startled)* A good hard what?

**FRANK:** Yank.

**LARRY:** Oh, YANK! I thought you said something else.

*(With much difficulty, Larry stands up.)*

**LARRY:** Let's celebrate with a real drink. There's a half bottle in my room. Oh! Shit! I forgot, I can't drink now at all can I?

**FRANK:** Not unless you want to go back into the intensive care unit.

**LARRY:** Huh! Next time it will be a wooden box NOT intensive care!

**FRANK:** And don't you forget it. Besides, there's no half bottle in your room. We drank it on Christmas day.

**LARRY:** *(Pretending)* You bastards!

**LARRY:** Excuse me a minute. I have to go to the toilet quick or I'll have an accident. *(To teddy bear)* Come on you. I'll show you your new room.

*(Larry stands and starts to hobble off stage.)*

**FRANK:** Is he sleeping in the toilet?

**LARRY:** Only if he snores. And I'll tell you something for the record Frank.

**FRANK:** What?

**LARRY:** Whatever happens from here on in, one thing's for sure, it ain't gonnie be a teddy bear that this little black duck's cuddling next Christmas. No, Siree, Bob! And I ain't gonnie be spending another Christmas day sitting on that sofa moaning about what a rotten year it's been. Mark my words. Good or bad, thing's is gonnie be changing real soon.

**FRANK:** *(Sarcastic)* Oh, wow! Not again!

**LARRY:** *(Pointing)* Just remember I said that, okay?

**FRANK:** 'Kay.

*(Larry exits.)*

**FRANK:** *(Shaking head)* Daft bastard!

**LARRY:** *(Off stage)* What?

**FRANK:** I hate being a grown up!

**LARRY:** *(Off stage)* Me too!



## Scene 5 (New Version) - Sitting Room

### (Christmas Day - Night Time)

*(Stephanie and Larry are sitting on opposite ends of the sofa watching television. Larry is cuddling the teddy bear.)*

**LARRY:** *(Heavy sigh)* Oh, Stephanie dear Stephanie?

**STEPH:** Mmm?

**LARRY:** What a BLOODY rotten year it's been! Come back Mr Blobby, all is forgiven!

**STEPH:** Mmm?

**LARRY:** Nothing ever changes!

**STEPH:** Mmm.

**LARRY:** I had sooo many plans for this year. Done nothing.

**STEPH:** Mmm.

**LARRY:** I didn't even finish my novel.

**STEPH:** Mmm? *(Not really listening)* I'm a slow reader too...

**LARRY:** *(Annoyed)* No! The one that I'm writing!

*(Stephanie turns the TV onto stand by.)*

**STEPH:** *(Sighing)* Okay... I can't be bothered beating about the bush. Why didn't you finish writing your novel Larry?

**LARRY:** Novel? What novel?

**STEPH:** Why didn't you finish writing your novel, Someday, One Day?

**LARRY:** Because.

**STEPH:** Because what?

**LARRY:** *(Annoyed)* Just because. That's all.

**STEPH:** That's not a reason.

**LARRY:** *(Sighing)* It's no big deal Steph.

**STEPH:** So, tell me.

**LARRY:** It was based on something that really happened to me. I thought writing it down would help lay a few ghosts to rest. It didn't. It just brought it all back again.

**STEPH:** Brought what back again?

**LARRY:** The time when I was so down that I nearly killed myself.

**STEPH:** But, you didn't.

**LARRY:** Obviously not! Ten out of ten.

**STEPH:** So what happened? Was it over a woman? I bet it was over a woman.

**LARRY:** You don't want to hear about it.

**STEPH:** Look you, Mr drama Queen, spill the beans or else!

**LARRY:** Good Golly Mr Molly! I'm pishing my self! *(Loud)* Or else WHAT, tough guy?

**STEPH:** Or else you CAN find a new place to live Buster! I don't want any more surprises like last Christmas. How many more BIG secrets do I have to stumble on before you can trust me?

**LARRY:** *(Sighing)* Okay. I'll tell you about it - not because I want to - but because I want to prove that I trust you.

**STEPH:** Okay. Fire away.

**LARRY:** But, I insist that you hear everything. Every little nasty detail. If it upsets you, it's your own fault.

**STEPH:** Okay.

**LARRY:** I've something I want to ask you first. Well, I mean, something I want to tell you about. It's about those flowers you were sent last Valentines day.

**STEPH:** What, the ones you sent me? Is that all the big secret?

**LARRY:** *(Annoyed)* No, that's not it! *(Realization)* What? You mean, you knew?

**STEPH:** *(Coy)* Yeah. *(Normal)* Not at first, I didn't. At first, I just hoped they were from you. But, you never said anything, so I thought they must have been from my Ex.

**LARRY:** How'd you find out? Did Frank grass me up?

**STEPH:** Nope.

**LARRY:** Then, how...?

**STEPH:** *(Interrupting)* Last week, when you gave me that pile of scrap paper to scribble on.

**LARRY:** Yeah?

**STEPH:** There was a card amongst it which read, 'A Beginning Or An Ending? All My Love Larry'.

**LARRY:** Oh!

**STEPH:** Yes, oh! I wasn't going to say anything, but you brought it up. You should have just sent it with the flowers. Why didn't you?

**LARRY:** I thought you might have been annoyed.

**STEPH:** Why would I be annoyed at someone I really L... erm..?

**LARRY:** Like?

**STEPH:** Yeah! Someone I really - like - sending me a gift?

**LARRY:** *(Embarrassed)* D'know. You might have thought I fancied you or something and started looking for a new flat mate.

**STEPH:** *(Nervous)* And do you?

**LARRY:** What?

**STEPH:** Fancy me?

*(There is an embarrassed silence during which both seem on the edge of panic. The phone rings. They both jump out of their skins. Stephanie picks up the receiver and drops it getting the cord tangled.)*

**STEPH:** *(Into phone)* No. We got one put in yesterday... Right, bye!

*(She puts the phone down.)*

**STEPH:** *(Nervous laugh)* Fitted kitchens!

**LARRY:** *(Nervous laugh)* Yeah, right! Nearly jumped out of my skin!

**STEPH:** Yeah! Me, too!

*(There is another short embarrassing silence.)*

**STEPH:** So, er, em...

**LARRY:** *(Frightened)* What!

**STEPH:** So, er... em...? *(Changing subject quick)* What about this big secret then? Eh?

**LARRY:** *(Confused)* Big secret?

**STEPH:** Yeah. The one that stopped you writing your book?

*(Larry sighs in relief and visibly relaxes.)*

**LARRY:** Oh, er, you were right. It WAS a woman.

*(Stephanie relaxes too.)*

**STEPH:** Ah, I knew it!

**LARRY:** Big deal, Mz smug bitch. So you were right? It was a woman. Okay? Happy? Want a gold star?

**STEPH:** Go on.

**LARRY:** It was a long time ago. I was a waiter in one of the big golfing hotels. Her name was, my all time mostest, bestest favouritest girls name in the whole wide world!

**STEPH:** Mmm?

**LARRY:** *(OTT)* A name which - by its very mention - conjures up erotic images of femininity!

**STEPH:** Her name was Stephanie?

**LARRY:** Yeah.

**STEPH:** Now there's a coincidence?

**LARRY:** Not really. I've known six Stephanie's and they've all been right weird bitches.

**STEPH:** *(Teasing)* Bad as me?

**LARRY:** Much worse.

**STEPH:** That's bad.

**LARRY:** She was the assistant manageress at the hotel.

**STEPH:** Was she nice looking?

**LARRY:** Lovely. Nothing like the other Stephanie's at all.

**STEPH:** Charming!

**LARRY:** Present company excluded, of course.

**STEPH:** Of course.

**LARRY:** I don't believe in love at first sight, but I did fancy her at first sight. She looked at me in an odd surprised way as if I was a long lost friend. For no apparent reason, I felt really pleased to see her. For a second or two I expected her to say something. She didn't, so I didn't.

**STEPH:** Is all this relevant?

**LARRY:** No, an elephant, is a large mammal with big ears.

**STEPH:** No! Not elephant. Relevant. Is it all really relevant, all this not saying something?

**LARRY:** Yes. I'm painting the scene.

**STEPH:** Paint away.

**LARRY:** (*Larry mimes painting in a manner which Rolf Harry would be proud*) Who was she? Why did I feel so strange? Did she know she was lovely? How could I get to know her? Then I realised, looking the way she did, she wouldn't have been interested in me in a million years. (*Raising finger in the air*) But...

**STEPH:** (*Interrupting*) She was?

**LARRY:** Yes. Two weeks later she asked me out. Can you believe it?

**STEPH:** No. Ugh! Mr ugly! (*Shuddering*) Makes me shudder to think it. Eeeugh!

**LARRY:** I mean me - in my early twenties - who had never even been on a date before! I couldn't believe my luck. I remember the moment so clearly. She was dressed in this little pale purple number. A short tight skirt and low cut blouse. And she had these big... (*Mimes large breasts.*)

**STEPH:** (*Interrupting*) I get the point! She was a big girl.

**LARRY:** Very.

**STEPH:** No need to gloat.

**LARRY:** She leans forward in her chair, rests an elbow on the desk and with her chin held in a beautifully manicured hand. Metallic pink it was...

**STEPH:** What, her hand?

**LARRY:** Her nail varnish. Metallic pink. That shade you hate.

**STEPH:** Ah! You mean prostitute pink!

**LARRY:** That's the one. And she says, 'I know this nice place in town where you could take me for a drink and a chat, so why don't you ask me out?'

**STEPH:** What did you say?

**LARRY:** Nothing. I was too shocked. After a moments silence she says, 'Eight O'clock be okay?' I says yes - well, stutter yes - and she asks if she's being too forward?

**STEPH:** And was that when you started to do cartwheels?

**LARRY:** Yes. No! Shut up! So, to cut a long story short we had a real nice night out. We got on so unbelievably well together. It turned out we had a lot in common.

**STEPH:** What? You mean she was a pain in the arse too?

**LARRY:** She says how much she loved my Scottish accent. Although she is English, she was brought up in Scotland. 'Why did you leave?' I asked. And that was when it happened.

**STEPH:** You peed your self?

**LARRY:** Very nearly... She takes a deep breath and suddenly panicky says 'I had a bad experience.' For ages there was an uncomfortable silence. (*Larry pauses whilst Stephanie stands and turns off the TV*) My mind raced illogically. A word formed at the back of my mind. (*Upset*) A bad word. An evil word. A word I had no reason to be thinking...

(*Larry has to stop for a moment as he is trying hard not to cry.*)

**STEPH:** She was raped?

**LARRY:** (*Nodding*) Yeah.

**STEPH:** Must have shocked you.

**LARRY:** Shocked me! (*Nervous laugh*) Suddenly I was terrified to be near her. Frightened in case she was a loony who would scream just 'cause I had my arm around her shoulders.

**STEPH:** An understandable reaction.

**LARRY:** (*Interrupting*) Yeah, maybe! But, I didn't know how to handle it. I panicked. My mind gibbered. I wasn't worried that she HAD been raped. I was worried that she HADN'T.

**STEPH:** That's...

**LARRY:** (*Interrupting*) Disgusting? I know!

**STEPH:** I wasn't going to say that.

**LARRY:** But it is disgusting, isn't it? So, very VERY disgusting! (*Pause*) I never believed I was capable of hoping that someone WAS lying about rape. I couldn't bear it to be true. I was desperate to believe her, but I couldn't. Things didn't fit.

**STEPH:** What didn't fit?

**LARRY:** She insisted on me coming back to her cottage for a cup of tea. Then she tells me - in great detail - of an uncle who repeatedly abused her as a child.

**STEPH:** Her, uncle raped her?

**LARRY:** Yeah. Keep it in the family, eh? (*Weak grin*) She kept it secret because he told her that no one would believe her. And when he got too old to get it up any more, she forgave him.

**STEPH:** Forgave him?

**LARRY:** (*Near to tears*) Pathetic isn't it? By this, I'm close to tears and she suddenly... grins and says, 'You're a virgin aren't you?' I answer yes without thinking and I realize her hand is undoing my fly. (*Bitter*) Bet you can't guess what happened next?

**STEPH:** Erm, I get the gist of it. I can work out the rest.

**LARRY:** No, you can't. I said I was going to tell you everything and I meant it.

**STEPH:** Something's I can work out for my self.

**LARRY:** She unzips my fly and... *(pause)* And I'm out of there like a two bob rocket. Whoosh! Out of that cottage as if my arse was on fire.

**STEPH:** One minute she's talking about being abused, the next she's fiddling with your bits? Both things in the one breath? I don't get it.

**LARRY:** Neither did I. Rape victims don't act like that. Least in my mind they don't. Know what happens next? I get back to my waiters quarters at the back of the hotel. I'm shaking like a leaf, and guess what?

**STEPH:** What?

**LARRY:** She's already there waiting for me.

**STEPH:** Never!

**LARRY:** Yup. Word of truth. Standing there as cool as a cucumber. She apologises for coming on too strong and says she won't do it again.

**STEPH:** What did you do?

**LARRY:** Nothing. I say I believe her and say goodnight, and guess what?

**STEPH:** What?

**LARRY:** She doesn't do it again. And some weeks later when she asks me out again, I go out for a drink with her again.

**STEPH:** What? Were you mad?

**LARRY:** Two months later and we're the best of friends. I've stopped doubting her story and have fallen in love with her. Then, one night, she tries it on again. This time I don't stop her.

**STEPH:** Huh! I hope you used a condom.

**LARRY:** Liquorice flavoured.

**STEPH:** Of course! What else?

**LARRY:** I stayed there in her cottage the whole weekend. We had a bath together and ended up making love 14 times that weekend.

**STEPH:** 14 times! Huh! You wish?

**LARRY:** 14 times. I worked it out later. That Monday, I phoned in sick cause I was too sore to be able to walk properly.

**STEPH:** Horny bastard!

**LARRY:** Hey! This is my most secret, secret heartbreak I'm telling you about. If I don't tell you why what we had was so special you won't understand how hurt I was when it went bad.

**STEPH:** Sorry. It sounds like wishful thinking. I mean, 14 times!

**LARRY:** I was in heaven for the next three months. So was she. So intense it was unreal. Still is.

**STEPH:** So, what went wrong.

**LARRY:** *(Shrugging)* Don't know. There was no reason I could see. We hadn't had an argument. In fact I don't remember us EVER having an argument.

**STEPH:** Must have had them. All couples argue.

**LARRY:** We don't.

**STEPH:** We're not a couple.

**LARRY:** *(Sad)* Yeah, right. Course we ain't. *(Pause)* Out of the blue she says that it is over. She feels that she shouldn't have been clubbing when I working because she felt that she should have been with me. Rather than give up partying, she decided that she would rather not see me, then she wouldn't feel guilty any more.

**STEPH:** She said that? That's unbelievable!

**LARRY:** Yup. For months she was obsessed with me and everyone knew it, then for no reason at all she goes off me. Just like that. *(Tries to snap his fingers, but can't. After several tries he succeeds)* That.

**STEPH:** How old was this... *(Reluctantly)* ...girl? Seventeen? Eighteen?

**LARRY:** *(Laughing)* Seventeen! Eighteen! No. She was a grown woman. You don't get eighteen year old manageress of four star hotels. She was thirty four.

**STEPH:** Thirty four?

**LARRY:** Yup. Thirty four. Though for what it's worth, I don't know how she got the job cause she acted like a ten year old most of the time.

**STEPH:** Sounds like she had a screw loose.

**LARRY:** Yeah, that's what everyone said, but I wouldn't listen.

**STEPH:** You were better off out of it matey.

**LARRY:** I didn't hate her for the way she treated me. The things her uncle did to her when she was a kid screwed up her mind good.

**STEPH:** If they really happened?

**LARRY:** Oh, I'm sure they did. It does explain things better if you believe in this nasty uncle of hers. She will always be a child and never have the sort of relationship that she wants.

**STEPH:** She wants a Knight on a white horse.

**LARRY:** And that.. *(Sighs with relief)* ...is more or less it. The really horrible part for me happened three weeks before we split up. She was showing me her family album. Much to my surprise, there was a picture of me in there. The weird thing was, I didn't



recognise the event. Turns out that it wasn't a picture of me at all. It was someone who looked and dressed like me. It was a picture of her uncle as a young man.

**STEPH:** THEE uncle?

**LARRY:** The very same one. The spitting image of me. *(Weak laugh)* It doesn't bear thinking about does it?

**STEPH:** No. Not really.

**LARRY:** And so, one night I got drunk, and decided to kill my self. Except, that I'd didn't kill myself. I fell asleep on the beach and dreamt that I met a strange boy who told me to look behind the darkness.

**STEPH:** So, the boy was a dream? I thought he was real.

**LARRY:** I hope he was a dream. Though as time moves on, I'm not so sure. Doesn't matter, he still stopped me from killing myself.

**STEPH:** *(Sarcastic)* Mmm? So it's not all good then!

**LARRY:** And there you have it. It wasn't a nice start and it wasn't a nice ending, but the bit in the middle was the best days of my life. I have a particularly vivid memory of that first morning together. We were having breakfast in the garden. It was a happy garden. We just sat smiling at each other. Being full of each others love. Wallowing together in the memories of the night before.

**STEPH:** 14 times?

**LARRY:** If you - dear Stephanie - were to ask me right now, if I would go back to her if I could? *(Considering)* I'd say yes. *(Pause)* But, only if I could choose that moment. That special fantasy moment that for a little while seemed - so real. I've known for a long time that I never really loved her. Though at that moment in time I thought I did. *(Sad)* And it was wonderful...

*(There is total silence for a few seconds.)*

**STEPH:** *(Loud)* Bollocks! The first taste of nooky hits everyone like that. When the first love goes it breaks the heart.

**LARRY:** *(Shrugging)* Probably. You want to tell me about your first love?

**STEPH:** Nope.

**LARRY:** Nope? I pour my heart out to you and you don't want to share?

**STEPH:** Don't need to. Now that you've told your all, you'll never surprise me again. Now what was it that you wanted to ask me?

**LARRY:** I've been thinking about - you - and - me...

**STEPH:** *(Suspicious)* Yes?

**LARRY:** Do you remember the story of the boy on the beach? Him asking what lay behind the darkness?

**STEPH:** Yes, but I still don't understand it.

**LARRY:** I do. When I woke up in the intensive care unit I understood what he was on about.

*(There is a moments silence in which Larry puts his hands over Stephanie's eyes.)*

**LARRY:** What lies behind the darkness?

**STEPH:** D'know.

**LARRY:** You.

**STEPH:** Me?

**LARRY:** Yup. Simple as that. We don't live in the real world, but we all think we do. Behind the darkness is where we really are.

**STEPH:** I still don't get it.

*(Larry removes his hands and gazes into Stephanie's eyes.)*

**LARRY:** *(Sighing)* Listen. I'll explain.

**STEPH:** *(Groaning)* Oh, no! I thought you might. Why can't you ever just get to the point?

**LARRY:** *(Urgent)* Look! This is worth waiting for. Just bear with me, okay?

**STEPH:** *(Sighing)* I'm bearing! I'm bearing!

**LARRY:** We deal with the world we see cause we can see it. This is my hand cause I can see it. This is my hand cause I can touch it...

**STEPH:** Very deep.

**LARRY:** But it's not me. I'm behind, in the darkness. We have to reach behind the darkness. Grasp what we can. Learn to like what we find. *(Struggling to find the right words)* To love our selves before... *(Trails off into silence)*

**STEPH:** Before what?

**LARRY:** Before we can love others. How many times has one of your pals had an argument with their man and ended up saying to you, 'Men! Huh! Weird bastards the lot of them', eh?

**STEPH:** Well, yous are.

**LARRY:** Right. The sexes both eat - and drink - and shit - and shag. *(Pause)* It's people that's weird bastards. Not men. Not women. We don't understand ANYONE until we look at ourselves behind the darkness. And unless we do, we'll never be happy with others.

**STEPH:** That's what they said in the 60's. You've turned into a hippy. Is that it? Is that what all this claptrap is about? Your trying to tell me that you want to buy a caravan and go and camp in Greenham Common?

**LARRY:** Greenham Common stopped happening a long time ago. Do, you get the point? Do you get what I'm trying to say?

**STEPH:** I... I think so?

**LARRY:** You think so? *(Stands up)* Look, see this man standing before you? This one? The one standing right in front of you? Right bloody now? Do you see him? Eh? If you knew this man as well as you know your self, you wouldn't know him at all!

*(Larry sits down beside Stephanie and takes her hand.)*

**LARRY:** In this past year I've tried to find my self.

**STEPH:** So, you HAVE turned into a hippy?

**LARRY:** It hasn't been easy, in fact it hurts quite a bit. One thing I'm sure of... One thing I'm certain of... *(Pause)* I love you Stephanie. *(Pause)* I don't expect you to fall into my arms right now, but someday... one day, I hope you might.

*(Larry kisses her hand.)*

**LARRY:** *(Weak laugh)* Someday, one day? Didn't mean to say that. Kinda poignant, don't you think. *(Pause)* Well? Don't you feel you want to say something to me Stephanie? Even if it's just bugger off. *(Pause)* Did you actually hear what I said a minute ago? I. Love. You.

*(Stephanie is close to tears.)*

**STEPH:** *(Sniffing)* I believe you Larry. I... I, love you too.

*(They kiss tenderly and embrace. Larry pulls away only to look into Stephanie's eyes.)*

**LARRY:** *(Near to tears, smiling)* All this time I thought it was just me. All this time I've been scared to tell you in case I lost you...

**STEPH:** *(Interrupting)* Oh, do shut up you soppy sod! Are you going to ask me to marry you or not?

*(Larry grins like an idiot. The phone rings. Stephanie answers.)*

**STEPH:** *(Politely)* Piss off.

*(Stephanie slams the phone down.)*

**STEPH:** Well?

**LARRY:** *(Pausing to get on knees)* Will you marry me?

*(The phone rings again. Stephanie answers it again)*

**STEPH:** Still, piss off!

*(She slams the phone down.)*

**LARRY:** Will you marry me?

**STEPH:** I'll have to think about it.

*(For a few seconds, Stephanie toys with Larry by mumbling and making clicking noises with her tongue.)*

**STEPH:** I've thought about it.

**LARRY:** And?

**STEPH:** *(Pretending to say yes)* Yeeeeeee.... NO!

**LARRY:** *(Face falling)* No?

*(After a short silence, Stephanie starts to giggle.)*

**STEPH:** If you could have seen your face!

**LARRY:** *(Amazed)* Does this mean yes?

**STEPH:** *(Nodding)* Yes, this means YES, you silly sod!

**LARRY:** You bitch!

*(Laughing in tears they embrace. Then holding each others hands gaze into each others eyes. Without letting go her hand, Larry wipes away Stephanie's tears with a finger. They feel each other faces and then slowly kiss. Spotlight on Stephanie and Larry as the other stage lighting fades to black.)*

**The End**